

Standard 6-1: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the transition of humans from nomadic life to settled life in the cradles of civilization.

6.1.3 Use maps, globes, and models in explaining the role of the natural environment in shaping early civilizations, including the role of the river systems of the Nile (Egyptian), Tigris-Euphrates (Sumerian, Babylonian, Phoenician), Huang He (Chinese), and Indus (Harappan); the relationship of landforms, climate, and natural resources to trade and other economic activities and trade; and the ways that different human communities adapted to the environment. (G, H, E)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand/Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

This is the first time students have been taught about the role of the natural environment in shaping early civilizations.

The role of the natural environment in shaping early civilizations will not be taught in subsequent courses.

It is essential for students to be able to explain the role that the natural environment had in shaping the location and development of early civilizations. First, students should recognize all of these early civilizations developed along major rivers. Students should understand that these river valleys were ideal locations for civilizations to arise since they provided important resources (such as water, food, and fertile soil), natural trade/transportation routes, and, in some cases a natural defense against attacks. It is important for students to be able to locate these early civilizations on maps and to associate the development of each civilization with a major river. In addition to providing important resources, students should understand that these rivers could be dangerous in times of flooding and that civilizations had to take measures to control flooding and/or lessen the severity of the impact. In spite of these attempts to control flooding, early civilizations often suffered devastating losses associated with this phenomenon. Students should not only be able to describe the common characteristics of river valley civilizations but also be familiar with some of the distinct characteristics of each river valley and its associated civilization. Specifically, students should be able to describe major physical features in addition to rivers that impacted civilizations – especially the nearby location of deserts which helped isolate and protect these civilizations as they developed. Since these early civilizations were predominately agriculturally based it is critical that students have a basic understanding of the type of products developed in each civilization and the trade which resulted from the production of these goods.

It is not essential for students to know the groups/ethnicities of these early civilizations. It is not necessary to know detailed geographic information about each river such as its tributaries, its source, etc., but relative location could be important in understanding the trade associated with each civilization.

Assessment guidelines: For this indicator there should be a strong non-linguistic component incorporated into assessments. Appropriate assessments should require students to **utilize** maps to locate the river civilizations, interpret maps that identify the major river civilizations, infer the relationship between rivers and other landforms, detail trade patterns, and/or ascertain the resources that would be available to a civilization. It would also be fitting for students to **hypothesize** about the continued development of these civilizations based on the interaction of key components including, but not limited to, location, availability of resources, and potential for trade. In addition it would be suitable to have students **summarize** the development of individual river valley civilizations or to compare civilizations – either as a whole or with specific components (examples – compare the Harappan civilization to the Sumerian [whole] or compare the natural resources among all these civilizations [specific components]).